



Amendment 4: Higher Taxes, Fewer Jobs, More Lawsuits

Amendment 4—a statewide “Vote on Everything” initiative—is a grave threat to Florida’s future. This proposed re-write of the Florida Constitution will imperil Florida’s economy and unique quality-of-life.

The amendment subverts a well-established and democratic planning process while threatening Florida’s prospects for economic recovery. With the “Vote on Everything” amendment, citizens—not the representatives they elected—are forced to regularly decide hundreds of technical land-use planning issues at the ballot box.

Much is at stake for all Floridians:

- **The disruption** to the daily lives of Floridians will be extraordinary. Taxpayers will be required to fund elections for each proposed comprehensive plan change – not just major projects, but even minor technical details. It will not be unusual for the voters to face 200 to 300 comprehensive plan changes every year. In the last four years alone, this amendment would have required an average of over 10,000 additional local referenda per year in Florida. According to a review of state records, if Amendment 4 had been law in 2006, the residents of Carrabelle, a small Franklin County town, would have voted 617 times!
- **The disorder** will further disenfranchise Florida's electorate. Voters will be deluged with highly technical background materials prepared by local government planning staff. The legalese of proposed comprehensive plan changes, often puzzling for expert engineers and attorneys, will further dampen voter turnout. Lines at voting booths will grow as Floridians attempt the virtual impossibility of voting on hundreds of separate and often confusing ballot questions.
- **The cost** to Florida taxpayers will be astronomical. Every city and county in Florida will be burdened with the time and cost of holding additional elections to vote on proposed changes to comprehensive land use plans. The *Orlando Sentinel* notes that these costs would “soar into the millions.” And in these difficult economic times, local taxpayers will have to pick up the bill.
- **The result** will be a system that is far worse, not better. That’s why respected environmental leaders refuse to support the amendment. They know this proposal will transform every planning decision into a political campaign, thereby encouraging sprawl and making smarter growth impossible.

The “Vote on Everything” amendment has already been a disaster in St. Pete Beach—the small Pinellas County town that adopted a local version of this proposal in 2006. Since then, residents have suffered through **endless litigation**, which has caused costs to spiral out of control and turned St. Pete Beach into a battleground for out-of-town lawyers and special interest groups.

Now, this amendment threatens to go state-wide. Amendment 4 will appear on the November, 2010 ballot. Citizens for Lower Taxes and a Stronger Economy leads opposition to this measure. To date, more than 200 organizations throughout Florida have opposed Amendment 4. More join the fight every day.